

## CLAYTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, July 24, 2006

The Center of Clayton – OASIS Meeting Room A

### ***The following members were present:***

Andy Goldberg, Chairman	Judy Goodman
Alex Berger	Dick Hyde
Brad Bernstein	Omri Praiss
Mimi Deem	Rich Yawitz

### ***Excused/Absent***

Deb Dubin  
Jill Indovino

### ***Also Present:***

Patty DeForrest, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Rebecca Campbell, Assistant Fitness Supervisor  
Eric Gruenenfelder, Athletics & Facilities Supervisor  
Kim Howard, Fitness Supervisor  
Ann Jacobs, Superintendent of Recreation  
Darren Noelken, Assistant Athletics & Facilities Supervisor

### **Approval of the Minutes**

An addendum was made to the June 26 meeting minutes. (Please see the attached revised minutes)  
Addendum – Mr. Bernstein stated he feels strongly that when Shaw Park Pool closes to the community for the CSP Swim Meet or any other event that the City of Clayton reciprocal payment be made to the City of Maplewood so Clayton residents and Clayton Shaw Park pass holders should not have to pay the resident rates when utilizing there pool. With this change, the minutes were approved as submitted.

### **Renaming of Alamo Park**

Ms. Goodman discussed the request to rename Alamo Park. The request came from the residents of the DeMun neighborhood. This park is a pocket park named after the street it is on, hence the name Alamo Park. There is no historical significance associated with the name, Alamo Park. It was created just across DeMun when an apartment building was torn down a number of years ago. The residents over the past couple of years have been very involved in researching the history of the HiPoint and DeMun neighborhoods and have uncovered something we are not familiar with, which is that HiPoint was developed by a well know architect and community planner whose name was Henry Wright. Henry Wright was born in 1878 in Lawrence Kansas and was educated at the University of Pennsylvania. He came to St. Louis in about 1913 and was involved in designing Brentwood Park east and west and Forest Ridge in St. Louis Country Club. Then in 1917 he was involved in laying out the plot and design for HiPoint, DeMun and Tuscany. Due to the national significance of his contributions as an early urban planner the residents would like to rename Alamo Park, Henry Wright Park. Ms. Goldman has discussed the rich history associated with of the park with a number of residents in the neighborhood. The other advantage to this change is that we make it more neighborhood participation and actually caring for the park might alleviate some of the burden on our City staff. Ms. Goodman brought this request to the Commission because it is the first step in this process to rename the park. We would arrange for some type of rededication so residents understand the significance of the change. Mr. Praiss asked if there would be a statue or a plaque to help people understand the change. In our City budget there is money to redo the lighting in DeMun because the neighborhood would like to see more historical lighting in the area, similar to lighting in some of the other parks, and there is also money for a new monument at the corner of DeMun and Clayton Road. The monument would make this area similar to Oak Knoll Park. There is also interest in hanging banners on light poles along DeMun showing recognition to Henry Wright. Mr. Bernstein noted that he believes it is likely a good idea to change the park's name, but would like for there to be a more formal process or a town hall meeting to see if there is approval for the name change. This will give additional Clayton residents the opportunity to give their input about the request. It was noted that the President of the Neighborhood Association has been involved in the discussions in reference to potentially changing the name of the park and is promoting this concept. It was also

suggested that an article be placed in the City Views in order to gain interest or to form a potential group to discuss this matter in greater detail. We have some signage and we are getting ready to replace so there is a hold on this sign. Ms. DeForrest stated that she likes the idea to send a letter to the residents and let them know we are thinking about renaming the park. The points made during this discussion are very valuable and we will be able to set up meetings that will hopefully assist with making this positive change. After a town hall meeting Ms. Goodman will report the results to the Commission and if the Commission approves the change, the renaming request will then go to the Board of Alderman for approval.

### **Director's Report**

The Center of Clayton lost power on July 19 due to the severe storm, and was closed for approximately 36 hours. We were able to reopen on July 21 at 12:00 p.m. There was vandalism at Shaw Park Aquatic Center on July 5. Three individuals threw glass bottles from the roof of Clayton on the Park. We had to drain both pools because there was so much glass at the bottom of them. The pool staff and the parks staff did an excellent job of getting it reopened. The police were able to identify the people who caused the damage and we will get restitution. This was not the first time we have had vandalism at Shaw Park Aquatic Center; however this is the first time we were able to find out who was responsible for the damage. There have been some preliminary discussions about security and the potential of putting security cameras in the pool. The security cameras (which were installed after our last incident) at Clayton on the Park are the reason we were able to find out who committed this crime. We could install an in water security system that would tell us if someone was in contact of the water.

We are at a slow part of the year with programming. At this time we are wrapping up all of our summer programs, and we are getting ready for our fall programs. We are going to have some new direction in community recreation this year based upon the budget. For the Master Plan we are bringing in a consulting firm that will evaluate our programming and give us some recommendations this year. We have a few events coming up in August, Musical Nights in Oak Knoll Park and Parties in the Park. On Sunday, June 23 Musical Nights was held at the Shaw Park Aquatic Center because there was no power at Oak Knoll Park. The event was a huge success.

Two big projects are getting geared up, 1) The Ball Field Project and 2) the Tennis Center resurfacing, which will take place in the next three months. The Ball Field project will take place on fields five and six. The project is going to bid on Friday and will start in the next month. The school district uses these fields and they are very prepared for this project. Games that normally take place on those fields will primarily take place at Gay Field. We will also be using some of the fields at Maplewood and Richmond Heights. The proposed project at the Tennis Center is to crack, seal, and resurface it. There are a lot of cracks on the courts. This project will take place in September and October. The tennis courts will not all be closed because the courts will be done in small increments. The project has to take place in early fall or early spring. This type of project should be completed every five to six years. We hired a horticulturalist his name is Phillip Stutz. He came to us from the Butterfly House at the Botanical Gardens.

Ms. Goodman and Ms. DeForrest are working with the Hanley House Council and the consultant. We have gotten through phase one and our next step is to work on phase two with them. Phase one established goals of the Council and what we are trying to do. We are waiting for the final report. Phase two will be developing a plan and it may be very extensive. Before the Council goes forward we want to see the report on Phase one so we can draw some conclusions from that phase before we seriously consider funding Phase two. One thing we learned from the consultant is that in order to make the Hanley House an active asset in the community we need to make it a destination. In order to make it a destination there are many aspects that need to take place. It is hard to assess its value in its current state because we do not currently market it.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Public Forum was cancelled and will be rescheduled in August. The community surveys are under way and were mailed to a sampling of fourteen hundred families. The

survey is confidential because it is not mailed to the Park and Recreation Department; it is mailed directly to the consultants. The working committee worked with some consultants to create the survey.

We are reaching the point where the budget will go for approval to the Board of Alderman for the City side and the Center budget will also go for approval, and then we are scheduled to go the Board of Education on September 13. The Parks crew is very busy cleaning up all of the parks. Oak Knoll is one of the parks that was hit very hard during the storm.

### **Athletics & Facilities Report**

Two months ago several things came up about our sports and athletics facilities departments. Mr. Gruenenfelder and Mr. Noelken prepared a presentation to address some of the issues that were discussed at a Commission meeting in May. (Please refer to the attached Power Point presentation informational handout for detailed information) Currently the Sports department receives many phone calls from people who would like to rent fields in Shaw Park. We continually help teams who do not play on recreational teams find field space. Mr. Goldberg stated that he is in favor of the recreational format, but within that format he would like for us to see if we can operate some of the leagues at a competitive level. Mr. Gruenenfelder suggested that it would be difficult to run competitive leagues because then it excludes the recreational aspect where all children get the opportunity to play. Approximately twenty to twenty-five percent of people surveyed stated that they would like to see competitive leagues. Mr. Goldberg stated he believes we are losing something by having twelve or thirteen players leave our recreational program to go somewhere else. If we offer this option starting in kindergarten or first grade and work it through and show that it is a viable option parents may keep their children in programs run by the Clayton Parks and Recreation department. Ms. DeForrest noted that the thing that is important is there were several suggestions that are very doable and the most viable one is to create a focus group made up of parents who are interested in having the Sports department run competitive programs. It will be key to get their input and ideas. This will also help us to gain more information about how to balance recreational activities while nurturing competition. Mr. Praiss suggested that we consider offering ping pong and/or badminton recreational teams, which could consist of family competition.

### **Youth Activity Center**

We recently talked about the youth activity center we are proposing to put here at the Center of Clayton. We are currently looking for funding so you may start hearing about this in the community. Ms. Howard, Ms. Campbell and Ms. Jacobs helped create this proposal along with all of the goals teams. (Please refer to the attached Power Point presentation handout for detailed information.) The ideas for the activity center were prompted by the consistent and wide spread statistics on youth obesity in America and the lack of activity of children in America. We want to offer activities for youth who are not interested in competitive sports. The activity center would be located where the game room is at the present time. We often hear that there is not enough for children two years of age to thirteen years of age to do at the Center. There will be many activities for children to do in this activity center that will definitely get them moving. Mr. Praiss suggested that we conduct more research to see it is best to target the two to thirteen age group or if we need to adjust this range. The activity center would give parents the opportunity to put their small children into a program instead of just having them in the Kid Center while they are utilizing the Center. Mr. Berger suggested that we work on the numbers associated with the return on investment. His quick numbers show that in six years we pay off the investment, but we need to know how long the items purchased will be useful. Something has to give to make this project more financially sound. A little more benchmarking is necessary.

### **Old Business/New Business**

No old or new business to report

Respectfully Submitted By,

Denise Ucinski

